

Friend - friend w/ Brits
This handed us
by Brits -
14 September 1949

Information given us
by Brits 14 Sept. 49 re
Albania (from French
Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
— Economic conditions —

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21 Feb 49

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3. From a military point of view Soviet assistance appears to be on a large scale. Russian technicians, officers and other ranks are stiffening the Albanian defensive dispositions opposite Yugoslavia. It is estimated that there are 3,000 Russian soldiers in Northern Albania. Military material and munitions are coming

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SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

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by Brits -
911 14 September 1949*

SECRET

We have received the following information concerning Albania from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The French apologize for the fragmentary nature of this information and said that they were passing it on to us under all reserve. But they explained that it was very difficult for the Minister at Tirana to obtain precise information about developments in Albania:-

2. According to the latest information, the economic situation of the country is going from bad to worse. Albania seems to be on the brink of a famine like those from which she has suffered periodically since 1913 and which she was able to overcome in the past only with the help of the League of Nations and later of Italy. Neither the Russians nor the satellites seem to be able to supply the foodstuffs and consumption goods of which Albania is totally destitute to-day. The government fear that if they cannot ensure a minimum standard of feeding for the population this winter, there will be serious disturbances, which will be supported from outside. Accordingly Hoxha has had to ask the Russians either to send him the goods which he needs, or to authorise him to apply for help to the United States. The Soviet Government however seems by no means ready to supply the Albanian Government with as much help as they would expect to get from the United States. The reserves of food delivered in Tirana seem to have been to a large extent sent to the Greek frontier, where they have been stocked as provision for a winter campaign. The arrival of fugitives from the Greek rebels (about 10,000) will also weigh heavily on the Albania economy. This year's crop, although better than last year is still insufficient and the government has therefore endeavoured to enter into still closer relations with the Soviet Government hoping that the Russians could not abandon them for fear of losing prestige. The price of food is increasing but for the moment the population is not starving. The last stocks brought in by U.N.R.R.A. and the Yugoslav Government were distributed last year. Rationing is no longer much use as most commodities are unobtainable.

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in by air, by the air-lift from Bucharest to Tirana organised in January last, or by sea through the ports of Durazzo and Valona. Strategic works have been carried out under the direction of Soviet specialists. These include the improvement of road and rail facilities, the building or enlargement of aerodromes, the improvement of port facilities, the setting up of a submarine base at Vlora and the fortification of the Island of Sazeni, which cannot only neutralise Corfu, but might also be capable of closing the Straits of Otrante. There has certainly been an increase in the Soviet Military Control Missions and their number last May was about 3,000 men. The port of Valona is under the control of Russian officers, and probably also Durazzo, where Russian and Rumanian ships are said to have unloaded in January and February last 3,000 tons of military material, 3,500 tons of railway wagons and 3,000 military passengers. Russian squadrons are said to land fairly frequently on the Tirana airfield. According to one estimate, which it has been impossible to check, there were already 10,000 Russians in Albania at the beginning of July.

4. Information about internal resistance movements is particularly difficult to obtain. In recent months however there have been reports of Maquis groups in the north of the country, probably supported by the Yugoslavs in particular in the region of Kossovo. A considerable number of desertions are said to have taken place in the Albanian army and in the motorised police force stationed between Berrat and Tirana. A "fairly important" revolutionary movement based on Albanian Communist refugees in Yugoslavia is said to be already active in Albania. Tirana radio mentioned on the 24th March the presence and activities of bands of these people in Albania. Some skirmishes are said to have taken place between the Drin and the Albanian Alps, while Yugoslav Maquis bands with the help of Albanian rebels seem to have been organised west of the line Bitolj-Skoplje. These bands are said to number 2,000 men in the Albanian Alps, 1,000 on the east bank of the Black Drin and about 500 west of Lake Cohrid.